

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS (NSA)

By

Dr. Jim Wirtz

**Chairman, NSA, School of International Graduate Studies
Naval Postgraduate School**

The NPS's Department of National Security Affairs (NSA) is unique among graduate programs that specialize in international relations and security policy. NSA brings together outstanding faculty, students from the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, National Guard, various defense agencies, and international officers and civilians from more than 60 countries to prepare tomorrow's military and civilian leaders for emerging security challenges.



Photo: Rod Searcey

International students at graduation ceremony

NSA provides a dynamic and exciting environment for students. Many of our professors undertake research projects sponsored by various U.S. government agencies with students' participation. What's more, our professors are engaged in mobile education teams worldwide providing assistance to countries and working with the host country's senior officials. NSA professors bring their first-hand experience, unique insights, and understanding of a country of region to the classroom, enhancing our students' understanding of the political/military dynamics of the country or region they are studying.

Masters Degree Courses

NSA offers Master of Arts (M.A.) level programs that vary in length from about 12 to 18 months in Monterey, California. With the exception of a few weeks off in December and the end of June, classes are in session continuously. Students can enter the program four times a year, in January, April, July, and October.

U.S. and international students can choose between two fully accredited curricula-- Regional Studies and Security Studies.

Regional Studies:

NSA is one of the leading centers for regional studies education in the world. The curriculum meets the high standards set by the U.S. Army for Foreign Area Officer education. Students can specialize in the following four areas:

- Middle East, Africa, and South Asia
- Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific
- Europe, Russia, and Central Asia
- Western Hemisphere

Security Studies:

The Security Studies curriculum is divided into several tracks for both U.S. and international students:

- Civil-Military Relations
- Stabilization and Reconstruction
- Defense Decision-Making and Planning
- Homeland Security (U.S. students)

Our Faculty and Students

Approximately sixty full and part-time faculty and over three hundred students are in residence at any given time at NSA. Most students complete an M.A. thesis as part of their degree requirements. Unlike other graduate programs, the Department does not rely on teaching assistants as instructors. Our faculty, not research assistants, teach all classes. NSA professors pride themselves on being responsive to the evolving needs of our students.

As noted previously, our U.S. students come from all branches of the military services-- Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps-- National Guard and defense agencies. Additionally, the U.S. Naval Academy and the U.S. Air Force Academy often send their best students to complete a master degree at NSA before they go on to other training.

Our international officers and civilians come from over 60 countries worldwide. They represent about one quarter of the student population at NSA. International students sit alongside their U.S. counterparts in virtually all classes (the vast majority of the classes are taught at the unclassified level).

Nowhere else do so many young officers gather from so many places to study so many vital issues. NSA offers the highest quality education to the future leaders of the world.

About the Author: Dr. Jim Wirtz joined the Naval Postgraduate School in 1990 after teaching at Penn State University and the State University of New York. Should you have any questions about NSA, please contact him or **Professor Doug Porch**, the new Chairman (in February 2005) at the following number: Tel: 831-656-2521;

Website: www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/

